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In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the U.S. initiated two military campaigns with the desired goal of eradicating the threat of transnational terrorism. The unexpected difficulties encountered in defeating al Qaeda, may be a result of the failure to defeat the enemy's center of gravity. This paper asserts that the extremist *takfiri* ideology holding al Qaeda and associated movements together is the center of gravity, and for long-term success the ideology must be defeated or neutralized. The identified center of gravity was deconstructed to identify the critical factors and decisive points required to strip the ideology of the support it needs to be successful. Four lines of effort were identified through this deconstruction and serve as recommendations for the development of operational planning constructs for the defeat of *takfiri* ideology. Finally, the paper draws conclusions that this extremist ideology is both a strategic center of gravity, the binding ideology that holds al Qaeda's leadership together, and an operational center of gravity for the diverse group of loosely linked organizations under the al Qaeda banner.

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GLOBAL *TAKFIRI* RADICALIZATION: A CENTER OF GRAVITY
DECONSTRUCTION

by

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Commander, U.S. Navy

Signature: _____

27 October 2010

CONTENTS

Abstract

In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the U.S. initiated two military campaigns with the desired goal of eradicating the threat of transnational terrorism. The unexpected difficulties encountered in defeating al Qaeda, may be a result of the failure to defeat the enemy's center of gravity. This paper asserts that the extremist *takfiri* ideology holding al Qaeda and associated movements together is the center of gravity, and for long-term success the ideology must be defeated or neutralized. The identified center of gravity was deconstructed to identify the critical factors and decisive points required to strip the ideology of the support it needs to be successful. Four lines of effort were identified through this deconstruction and serve as recommendations for the development of operational planning constructs for the defeat of *takfiri* ideology. Finally, the paper draws conclusions that this extremist ideology is both a strategic center of gravity, the binding ideology that holds al Qaeda's leadership together, and an operational center of gravity for the diverse group of loosely linked organizations under the al Qaeda banner.

INTRODUCTION

On 11 September 2001 the reality of terrorism was displayed against the global

symbols of American power, specifically economic (World Trade Center), military

(Pentagon), and political (failed attempt on the White House, Capital or other government

building in Washington DC). In the aftermath, the U.S. initiated two military campaigns

with the desired goal of eradicating the threat of transnational terrorism. Based on the

opening moves of the Afghanistan Campaign, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, it appears

that the center of gravity (COG) was identified by the U.S. as Osama Bin Laden and his inner

circle of top al Qaeda (AQ) operatives. The failure of the U.S. to capture or kill Osama Bin

Laden and his top advisor Ayman al-Zawahiri increased the influence of AQ among a diverse

population of radical extremists, and simultaneously weakened the perceived strength of the

U.S.[1]

Carl von Clausewitz developed the concept of ―center of gravity‖ as applied to

warfare; he described the COG as the ultimate substance of enemy strength, the hub of all

power and movement on which everything depends and the point against which all energies

should be directed.[2] The enemy‗s COG is considered to be of such importance that the

enemy cannot be completely defeated unless the COG is destroyed or neutralized.[3] The

unexpected difficulties encountered in defeating AQ may be a result of the failure to defeat

the enemy‗s COG. In recent years the radical ideology that holds AQ and associated

networks (AQAN)[4] together has been identified as the COG; therefore the ideology that

holds AQAN together must be defeated or neutralized.[5] COG deconstruction will identify

critical factors and decisive points that serve for the development of lines of effort capable of

defeating AQAN‗s primary strength, the appeal of its *takfiri* ideology. AQAN‗s extremist

ideology is both a strategic COG, the binding force that holds the base together (AQ proper), and an operational COG, the diverse groups of organizations and their linkages under the AQ banner.

AL QAEDA'S *TAKFIRI* IDEOLOGY

Osama Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and other key AQAN leaders developed a brand of extremist ideology that represented a unique hybrid of existing radical ideologies. The resultant ideology – *takfirism* – is the fusion of Islamism, a socio-political ideology developed and refined by the Muslim Brotherhood, and Wahabism, an ultra-conservative and puritanical understanding of Islam from Saudi Arabia, that employs violence through terroristic tactics to forcibly spread the ideology on a global scale.[6]

Takfirism –disobeys the Qurʻanic injunction of against compulsion in religion and instead holds that Muslims whose beliefs differ from the *takfiri's* are infidels who must be killed."[7] Dr. David Kilcullen, a prominent counterinsurgency exert, indicated that *takfirism* is regarded as heresy within Islam and was outlawed in a 2005 *Ammam Message* – an initiative of Jordanʻs King Abdullah II that brought together over –500 _ulema (Islamic scholars) and Muslim political leaders from the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Arab League in an unprecedented . . .unanimous agreement by all Muslims everywhere as represented by their acknowledged most senior religious authorities and political leaders."[8] The use of the term *takfiri* is preferential to jihad because its derogatory meaning in Arabic does not convey legitimacy to AQANʻs actions and ideology as does the term jihad.[9]

AQAN draws significant numbers of young Muslims from madrassas, often funded by Saudi Arabia, that serve as globally distributed indoctrination centers by promoting Wahhabi radicalism throughout the Islamic world and Muslim communities in the West,

including the U.S.[10] Unfortunately, during the Russian-Afghanistan war (1979-1989) there was an explosive growth of madrassas in the Pakistan-Afghanistan region that had greater concern on waging war than providing education.[11] Graduates of the madrassas are targeted for recruitment and indoctrination by AQAN recruiters to form a cadre of ―true believers" willing to subordinate individuality to the group and to blindly follow AQAN's leadership as a ―sacred duty."[12]

Dr. Tawfik Hamid, an authority on Islamism and former member of the Muslim Brotherhood, identified three broad stages, including hatred, suppression of conscience, and desensitization (or acceptance) of violence, involved in a the conversion of a recruit into a violent extremist.[13] According to Dr. Hamid, the hatred phase is of critical importance because it ―would be difficult to kill an innocent person if one didn't hate that person first."[14] The subsequent phase, suppression of conscience, is then used to pressure recruits ―to accept, promote, and praise acts that are entirely at odds with normal sense of decency and justice, simply because they are recorded in the religious books."[15] The final phase, desensitization to violence, develops terrorists willing to follow *Salafi* religious interpretations that non-believers are to be offered three options, ―convert to Islam, to pay the *jizya* (a humiliating poll tax), or be slain."[16] *Salafists* are ―Sunni Muslims who want to establish and govern Islamic states based solely on the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet as understood by the first generations of Muslims close to Muhammad."[17] In short, Dr. Hamid believes the progression through the three phases is required to build a mindset capable of mass murder.[18]

The development of a cadre who view complex issues with a simplistic worldview is essential for the long-term survival of AQAN's extremist *takfiri* ideology. *Takfiri* ideology plays a significant role in twisting Islam to produce individuals willing to conduct mass

murder of Muslim and non-Muslim targets, and is a significant reason why *takfirism* is identified as both a strategic COG and operational COG.

The classification of *takfiri* ideology as the COG potentially conflicts with Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, which indicates that at ―the operational level a COG is often associated with the adversary's military capabilities, such as a powerful element of the armed forces, but could include other capabilities in the operational environment."[19] AQAN's leadership, or Osama bin Laden in specific, has been identified in multiple studies as the COG for the war on terrorism.[20] This view seems to be supported by the writings of Dr. Milan Vego, a prominent expert in operational warfare, who proposed that in nondemocratic states the COG can be ―the authoritarian or dictatorial leader and his inner circle and their will to fight."[21] The AQAN leadership structure, while not representing a nondemocratic state, may be thought to serve an equivalent role. As a result, the failure to decapitate or capture the Taliban's top leadership and Osama bin Laden and his inner circle are responsible for the difficulties in consolidating strategic success in Afghanistan.[22]

The Islamist ideological phenomenon is recognized as a powerful aspect of the global terrorist network. Islamists can be defined as those who want *Shari'a* (Islamic) law to be the primary source of law and cultural identity in a state.[23] However, the identification of the ideology as the COG has been reported to be more of an incorrect application of a cold war mentality than reality because Islamist ideology shows such great diversity that there is not a single ideology to be discredited.[24] While political ideology can be replaced and overcome, religious ideology is persistent and resilient to defeat.[25] Religious-based ideology cannot be classified as the COG because a properly identified COG ―creates prerequisites for selecting a sound method of applying one's military and nonmilitary sources of power."[26] Therefore,

AQAN's radical ideology does not provide the prerequisites for developing methods of applying military and nonmilitary sources of power.
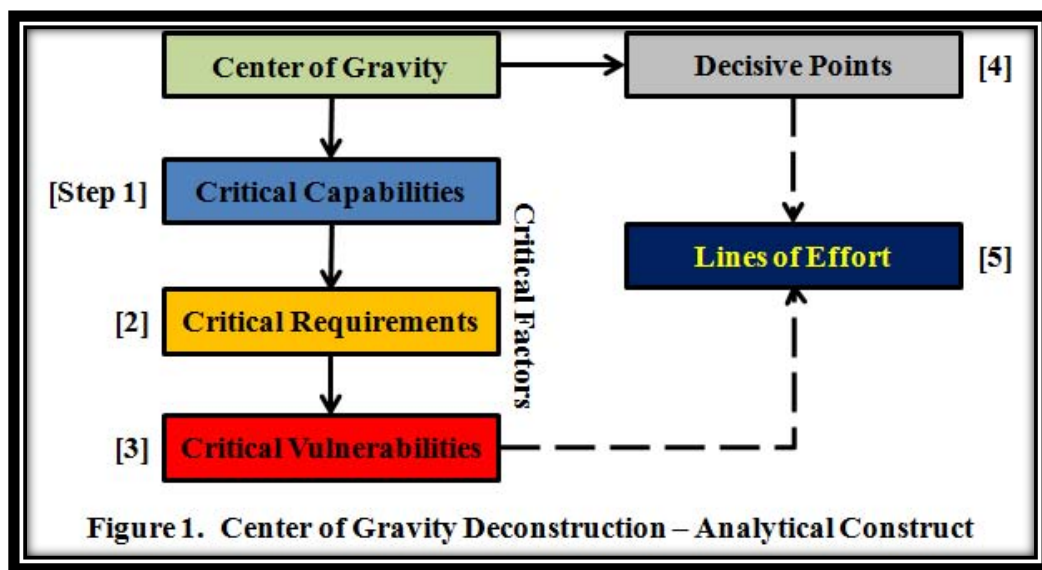
However, the identification of *takfiri* ideology, rather than AQAN leadership, as the COG is also supported in the literature.[27] AQAN's hatred of apostasy, an established characteristic of some of the most radicalized branches of Islam, was indicated as the group's COG because it draws raw power, recruits, money, and the support of other states.[28] Additionally, ideology serves to motivate AQAN's members to wage their particular style of asymmetric warfare and is likely to retain power and influence long after Osama bin Laden is no longer alive.[29] Perhaps 10 years ago the leadership of AQAN was the COG, but with the continued global spread of its *takfiri* ideology and the loss of safe haven in Afghanistan resulting in Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri going underground, the COG has clearly shifted to the ideology. Overall, the conclusion of these studies is that AQAN does not have a structural COG.[30] This conclusion serves as the starting point for further analysis to develop methods capable of defeating AQAN's primary strength, the appeal of its unique *takfiri* ideology.

CENTER OF GRAVITY DECONSTRUCTION

Operational art can be employed for COG deconstruction to develop approaches that counter AQAN's *takfiri* ideology; in doctrinal terms these approaches are called either logical lines of operations or lines of effort.[31] The term lines of effort will be used because it captures the essence of the doctrinal concept, the linking of multiple tasks with goal-oriented objectives to reach a desired end state.[32] A five step process will be used for COG deconstruction, including (1) identification of critical capabilities, (2) requirements, (3)

vulnerabilities, (4) decisive points, and (5) development of lines of effort (Figure 1).[33] The resultant lines of effort represent strategies to defeat the identified COG.

The analytical construct was modeled after the ―CG-CC-CR-CV construct,‖ developed by Dr. Joe Strange at the Marine Corps War College, and the COG analysis process described in Naval War College publication 4111H, *Joint Operation Planning Process (JOPP) Workbook*.[34] All critical factors, decisive points, and resultant lines of effort were independently identified following critical review and analysis of the literature.

Figure 1. Center of Gravity Deconstruction – Analytical Construct

Identification of Critical Factors

Critical factors (capabilities, requirements, and vulnerabilities) provide a framework for planners to analyze COGs.[35] In short, critical factors are those factors essential for the accomplishment of specific military objectives and can be tangible, i.e. quantifiable, or intangible, i.e. unquantifiable.[36] The critical factors for *takfirism* are likely to be intangible and therefore difficult to accurately characterize; however, the process provides utility and a framework to guide subsequent analysis.
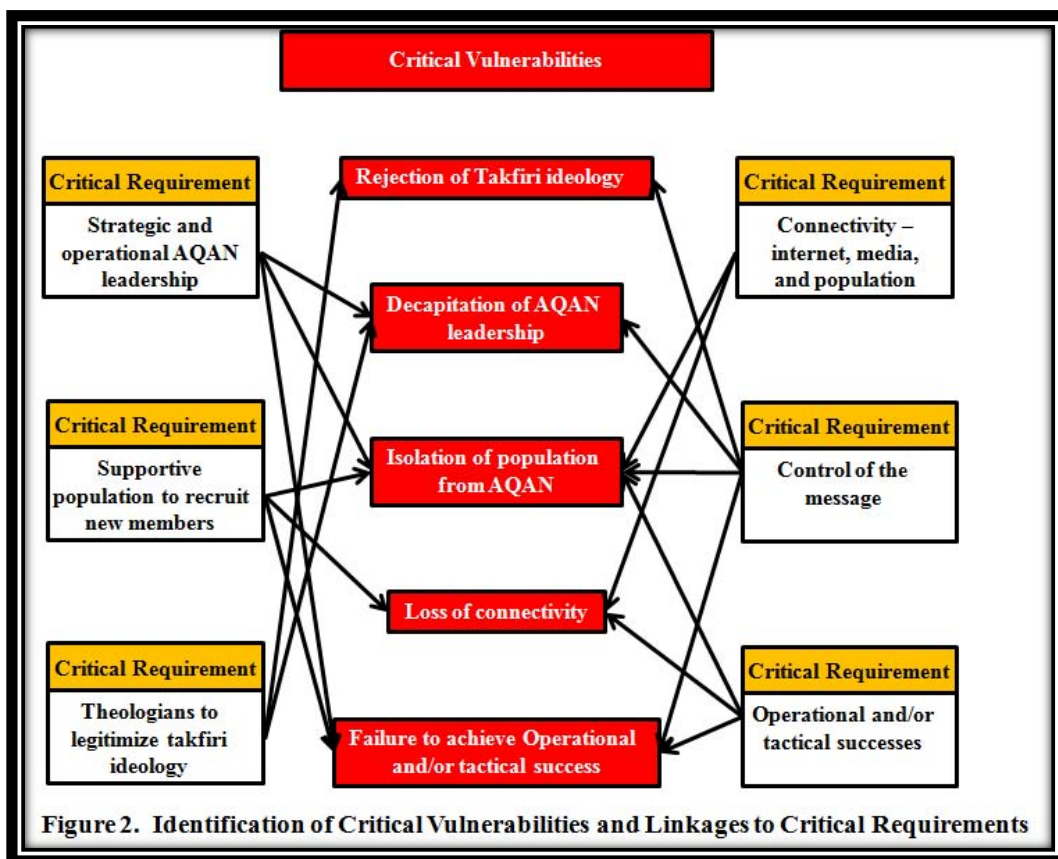
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Critical Capabilities. Critical capabilities are defined by joint doctrine as ―those means that are considered crucial enablers for the adversary‗s COG to function and essential to the accomplishment of the adversary‗s assumed objective(s).‖[37] For *takfiri* ideology the critical capabilities are (1) a well developed theological foundation and (2) global communication of this ideological foundation. These capabilities allow AQAN‗s brand of radical *takfirism* to persist even as AQAN is under intense pressure around the world. *Takfiri* ideology and communication networks produced an association of previously unorganized global community of radical Islam by providing leadership, unity, and wisdom.[38]

Critical requirements: Critical requirements are ―those essential conditions, resources, and means for a critical capability to be fully operational.‖[39] For the first critical capability, a well developed theological foundation, the following requirements were determined as necessary: (1) strategic and operational leadership, (2) a supportive population from which to recruit new members, and (3) theologians to legitimize *takfiri* ideology (Figure 2). For the second critical capability, global communication of the ideological foundation, the identified critical requirements are (1) connectivity, access to internet, global media, and population; (2) control of the message; and (3) operational and/or tactical successes. Taken together, these six critical requirements strengthen AQAN‗s legitimacy, allowing them to obtain the resources and manpower required to continue their global spread.

Critical vulnerabilities: Critical vulnerabilities are ―those aspects or components of the adversary‗s critical requirements which are deficient or vulnerable to direct or indirect attack.‖[40] To defeat AQAN‗s *takfiri* ideology, critical vulnerabilities within each subset of critical requirements, if they exist, must be identified. Five critical vulnerabilities are proposed across the critical requirements identified above; they are (1) the rejection of *takfiri*

ideology by the *Ummah* (Muslim community), (2) decapitation of AQAN leadership, (3) isolation of the population from AQAN, (4) loss of connectivity, and (5) failure to achieve operational and/or tactical success.[41]

The identified critical vulnerabilities are linked to multiple critical requirements (Figure 2). The defeat or neutralization of these vulnerabilities will weaken multiple critical requirements, creating —decisive or significant effects disproportionate to the military resources applied."[42] The critical vulnerabilities represent components that must be addressed by planners to defeat or neutralize the COG.

Figure 2. Identification of Critical Vulnerabilities and Linkages to Critical Requirements

Identification of Decisive Points.

The identification of decisive points – a geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function – is an important aspect of COG analysis as decisive points allow

commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary when acted upon.[43] A decisive

point is neutral in nature and by definition is —as important to both the enemy and friendly

commanders."[44] In this case there are numerous potential decisive points, with (1) the

Ummah and (2) communication networks determined as the most operationally significant.

LINES OF EFFORT

Lines of effort were developed to focus U.S. activities and to guide the development

of a logical arrangement of goal-oriented objectives, effects, or tasks to neutralize radical

takfiri ideology (the objective) allowing the defeat of AQAN (the desired end state).[45]

Although presented individually, the lines of effort are closely interconnected and should be

prosecuted in simultaneous or sequentially synchronized unified action depending upon

circumstances. The lines of effort identified through the analytical construct, address

primary grievances, deny safe haven, capture/kill AQAN Leadership, and Information

Operations (IO), require application of all the instruments of national power – diplomatic,

informational, military and economic (DIME).

Address Primary Grievances. The primary line of effort required to defeat *takfiri* ideology

as it targets five, of six, critical weaknesses (rejection of *takfiri* ideology, delegitimization of

AQAN leadership, isolation of the population from AQAN, loss of connectivity, and failure

to achieve operational/tactical successes) and a decisive point (the *Ummah*). Since it is the

key component of the strategy to defeat *takfirism* it is the most complex, time consuming,

and challenging of the identified lines of effort.

The importance of addressing primary grievances is based on the principle of

defeating AQAN's ability to draw strength from local grievances and incorporating them into

a broader strategy through the linkage of disparate conflicts with like-minded local groups

into its broader narrative.[46] Perhaps the most common, and important grievance to address,

is the lack of good governance.[47] The problem of good governance is particularly acute in

Afghanistan, where ―we really do need to see a government out there that the people will

respect. It needs to expand its influence, it needs to be perceived as less corrupt, it needs to

be providing services to the people behind [U.S.] clearing and holding capacity.‖[48] Essential

components of good governance are law enforcement, population control, border control,

human rights, and an independent and functional judicial system.[49] Other critical areas that

must be addressed include economic development/employment opportunity, educational

reform, and infrastructure development.[50]

In recent years, security cooperation has been recognized as ―the means by which

DOD encourages and enables countries and organizations to work with us to achieve

strategic objectives.‖[51] Through theater security cooperation (TSC) activities, DOD, along

with other U.S. government agencies and non-governmental organizations, can assist partner

nations with economic development/employment opportunity, educational reform, and

infrastructure development. Navy hospital ships serve as an example of TSC, and are

recognized as the ―capital ships of Soft Power‖ because they bring ―69,360 tons of medical

diplomacy‖ through global sea lines of communication.[52] During a 2005 visit to Banda

Aceh, Indonesia in response to the 26 December 2004 tsunami, the USNS Mercy medical

crew treated almost 10,000 patients in 40 days.[53] While en route to homeport in San Diego,

the ship was recalled to Indonesia to provide assistance to Nias Island, where the medical

staff performed another 7,500 procedures on 1,900 patients, both ashore and afloat, including

the performance of 64 surgeries aboard ship.[54] TSC through medical diplomacy serves as an

example of soft power that can have a significant effect on shaping the local Muslim

population's view of the U.S.

Addressing grievances weakens AQAN by reducing the supportive population from which to recruit new members, while increasing the ability to obtain useful intelligence from the community. Local populations that have positive partnerships with local government administrators, civil society leaders, and local security forces can decrease the ability of the AQAN to control the message, because these partnerships can rapidly respond to events to get ahead of AQAN's delivery of its message to local populations.[55] However, addressing grievances requires a significant time and resource commitment to weaken the COG.

Deny Safe Haven. This line of effort targets three identified critical vulnerabilities, isolation of the population, loss of connectivity, and failure to achieve operational and/or tactical success, and one decisive point, the *Ummah*. Denying safe haven has direct effect on isolating the *Ummah* from AQAN by keeping its leadership on constant vigil and the rank-and-file members on the move. By preventing AQAN from having safe spaces to rest, reconstitute, and regenerate the groups have reduced capability to plan and conduct missions. As a result, their ability to achieve the operational or tactical successes required for maintaining legitimacy is reduced. Denial of safe havens can also reduce or eliminate AQAN's connectivity with the media and population, although it probably has little effect on internet connectivity due to the ubiquitousness of the web.

AQAN's ability to conduct operations from safe havens increases their potential for success against government forces; therefore its denial is an essential component of a counter-ideology strategy.[56] Safe havens take many forms, including the exploitation of ―ungoverned or undergoverned area (in physical space or cyberspace), ideological, religious, or cultural blind spots, and legal loopholes."[57] As an example of the positive effect from deny safe haven operations, U.S. Marines in the Marjah area of Afghanistan gained the

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initiative from the Taliban in part by denying safe haven through patrols, overflights, and locating/disrupting their rest areas.[58] According to Gen James Conway, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, denying safe haven had a positive effect because the enemy is used to fighting in the spring, summer, and fall and recovering in a safe haven during the winter.[59]

Historically the best approach to counterinsurgency involves the host nation solving the problem with minimal or no external assistance.[60] However, in cases such as Afghanistan where external assistance is required, low profile actions emphasizing ―actions that exhibit a high ratio of effectiveness to visibility and collateral effects‖ offer the best course of action.[61] Low profile actions that place an emphasis on Special Operations Forces (SOF) led deny safe haven missions can be very effective and are reportedly considered ―the most feared by irregular warfare adversaries.‖[62] Additionally, these operations are often linked to the third line of effort, capturing or killing enemy leadership.

Capture/Kill AQAN Leadership. Capturing or killing AQAN‗s militant and theological leaders directly attacks a critical vulnerability, decapitation of the leadership. As a result of loss of leadership, the groups are likely to be less capable at planning and conducting successful missions, another critical vulnerability. Although new leaders will emerge, over time the effectiveness of the organization will be negatively impacted, as evidenced by a recent report indicating that weakened AQAN leadership resulting from successful targeting in Pakistan of AQAN‗s chief of external operations, Saleh al-Somali, was critical in undermining a planned attack in Norway.[63]

Despite its utility, the capture/kill line of effort should not be used in isolation from non-kinetic efforts because it inherently contains risk of generating a negative response, both diplomatically and in the press. For example, targeted killing, a specific application of the

capture/kill mission, is currently under intense scrutiny; particularly the increased use of unmanned drones to target and eliminate objectives and the SOF led hunter-killer teams in Afghanistan.[64] Military action alone is insufficient to defeat an ideology; a lesson from Vietnam recently relearned is that the U.S. is not going to kill its way to victory in Afghanistan.[65]

The capture/kill effort does not directly target the *takfiri* ideology. However, when combined with deny safe haven, the capture/kill line of effort can produce significant impact towards the end goal of defeating *takfiri* ideology. These two interlinked direct action lines of effort against the *takfiri* insurgents offer advantages because they directly weaken AQAN's strategic effect and deny terrorists physical and psychological sanctuary.[66] Therefore, capture/kill efforts are an important component of the objective of destroying *takfiri* ideology.

Information Operations. IO efforts attempt to create conditions where the *takfiri* ideology is rejected by both leading Islamic clerics and the *Ummah*, thus affecting a critical vulnerability and a decisive point. In addition, IO efforts can block AQAN's connectivity and ability to control the message, two critical requirements and a decisive point. Overall, an effective IO campaign can significantly impact the acceptance of *takfiri* ideology.

The importance of IO to AQAN is reflected on their reliance on the internet and friendly media to communicate with its members and target audience, and to spread its message.[67] AQAN employs IO to augment kinetic operations and in some cases the IO portion of the action may be the primary purpose. Indeed, Osama bin Laden indicated in a letter to Mullah Mohamed Omar that preparations for the media war may reach 90% of the total preparation for battle.[68] AQAN's IO campaign includes the issuance of *fatwas*,

protection and projection of extremist religious infrastructure, mobilization of grassroots support through cooperation with Islamist parties, and orchestration of favorable media coverage in the Islamic press.[69]

To counter AQAN's IO campaign, the U.S. must place an emphasis on IO as part of its ―overall plan of action that under some circumstances might be the main effort.‖[70] Therefore, the U.S. must develop and implement a ―comprehensive, effective communication strategy through which it may project and promote American interests, policies, and objectives abroad.‖[71] This communication strategy must be crafted to de-link local issues from the global insurgent system developed by AQAN to separate them from the local population.[72] An effective strategy will require an interagency approach because the militarization of IO is seen as a ―severe mistake which would confuse a part (military operations) with the whole (U.S. national strategy) and so undermine our overall policy.‖[73] Additionally, IO is critical for communication of positive efforts, associated with the addressing grievances line of effort, to the *Ummah* to reduce AQAN's legitimacy and recruiting pool.[74]

The implementation of an effective IO campaign, especially when conducted in support of other lines of effort, is critical for achieving the objective of defeating *takfiri* ideology. IO is effective because it can influence less radicalized *salafists* not yet committed to *takfiri* ideology to reject the extremist ideology and rejoin the non-radical *Ummah*. The importance of IO is reinforced by its close alignment with Clausewitz's ―moral‖ dimension of war, which he considered to be among the most important dimensions of war.[75]

Dr. Strange elucidated three principle methods for defeating or neutralizing a COG, including making the COG irrelevant, striping the COG of the support it needs to be

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successful, and exploiting systemic weaknesses.[76] The lines of effort described above were specifically developed to address each of the three principles. To support the continuation of the global spread of *takfiri* ideology there is an ongoing active recruitment of Muslim youth to pursue a life of violence.[77] The proposed lines of effort counter AQAN's radicalization efforts by attacking *takfiri* ideology through exploitation of critical vulnerabilities and decisive points because a non-structural COG cannot be defeated by the singular ―emphasis on killing and capturing enemy combatants rather than engaging the population."[78]

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The four lines of effort, identified through the application of COG deconstruction, serve as recommendations for the development of operational planning constructs to defeat *takfiri* ideology. AQAN's ability to leverage its unique radical ideology to attract like-minded terrorists groups from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East to its global insurgency banner support the position that *takfirism* is both a strategic and operational COG.

Counterradicalization is an important tool for implementing the recommendations, addressing primary grievances and IO in particular, and can be an important component of a strategy to defeat AQAN's ideology.[79] Counterradicalization involves development of ―programs that aim to rehabilitate former radicals and, ultimately, prevent radicalization through a combination of outreach, engagement, and aftercare."[80] For example, on 10 September 2010 Noman Benotman, a former associate of Osama bin Laden and former leader of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, publically called for Osama bin Laden to end his armed struggle by asking ―What has 11th September brought to the world except mass killings, occupations, destruction, hatred of Muslims, humiliation of Islam, and a tighter grip on the lives of ordinary Muslims by the authoritarian regimes that control Arab and Muslim

states . . . your actions have harmed millions of innocent Muslims and non-Muslims alike . . . how is this Islam or jihad?"[81]

Recently, two tenants underlying *takfirism*, *al-Tarrus* (an obscure Islamic doctrine used by AQAN as justification for killing Muslim civilians) and *Tawhid al-Hakimiyah* (Islamic doctrine used by AQAN as justification for declaring Muslim governments and individuals *takfir* [apostate]), have been identified as potential vulnerabilities.[82] The growing backlash against these doctrinal interpretations reinforces the message of Noman Benotman. These cracks suggest targets of opportunity for a coordinated IO campaign by identifying and exploiting contentious aspects of *takfiri* ideology that are vulnerable to targeted communications.[83] As only 2% of all fatalities caused by AQAN attacks from 2006 to 2009 were from the west,[84] the development of an effective counter message to *takfiri* ideology should not be difficult. Although reformed radical Islamists are not a panacea, they are important because they carry legitimacy within the *Ummah* to counter extremist messages leading to radicalization that cannot be replicated by the U.S.

The utilization of force, deny safe haven and capture/kill lines of effort, is essential to gain short-term security, but in the long term excessive reliance on force can promote the growth of insurgent forces; therefore the use of force must be conducted in balance with other forms of national power.[85] The lines of effort described above utilize force, primarily SOF led activities, in conjunction with soft power. Because AQAN's COG is ideology, rather than the traditional ―powerful element of the armed forces,"[86] nonmilitary forces are necessary, but not sufficient, for its defeat. The defeat of *takfirism* will require a unity of effort through the application of elements of national power – diplomatic, informational, military, and economic – to counter the hybrid warfare aspects of global insurgencies.[87]

NOTES

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography.)

1. Kepel, *Beyond Terror and Martyrdom*, 103 and 260.
2. Clausewitz, *On War*, 595-596.
3. Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare*, VII-13.
4. For this manuscript, AQAN refers to both AQ proper and its associated networks.
5. For examples, see: Reilly, ―A Strategic Level Center of Gravity Analysis on the Global War on Terrorism.‖ Haberkem, ―The Global War on Terrorism: Ideology as its Strategic Center of Gravity.‖ Keppler, ―Center of Gravity Determination and Implications for the War Against Radical Islamic Terrorism.‖ Schweitzer, ―Al-Qaeda: Center of Gravity and Decisive Points.‖ and Davis, ―Center of Gravity and the War on Terrorism.‖
6. For a review of radical ideology see: Hussain, ―A Brief History of Islamism,‖ 1-20.
7. Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, xviii.
8. Ibid., *xviii-xix*.
9. Ibid., *xix*.
10. Schwartz, ―Saudi Friends, Saudi Foes.‖
11. PBS Frontline, ―Saudi Time Bomb.‖
12. Post, ―Killing in the Name of God,‖ 19.
13. Hamid, *Inside Jihad: Understanding and Confronting Radical Islam*. 28.
14. Ibid., 28.
15. Ibid., 29.
16. Ibid., 30.
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19. CJCS, *Joint Operations Planning*, JP 5-0, IV-8.
20. For more information see: Ethridge, ―Center of Gravity Determination in the Global War on Terrorism.‖ and Bliss, ―Al Qaeda‗s Center of Gravity.‖
21. Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare*, VII-13.
22. Ibid., VIII-25.
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24. Smart, ―The Global War on Terror: Mistaking Ideology as the Center of Gravity.‖
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27. For examples, see: Reilly, ―A Strategic Level Center of Gravity Analysis on the Global War on Terrorism.‖ Haberkem, ―The Global War on Terrorism: Ideology as its Strategic Center of Gravity.‖ Keppler, ―Center of Gravity Determination and Implications for the War Against Radical Islamic Terrorism.‖ Schweitzer, ―Al-Qaeda: Center of Gravity and Decisive Points.‖ and Davis, ―Center of Gravity and the War on Terrorism.‖
28. Echevarria, ―Reining in the Center of Gravity Concept,‖ 93.
29. Ibid.

30. Morris, ―Al Qaeda as Insurgency,‖ 48.

31. For a description of Lines of Operations see: CJCS, *Joint Operations Planning*, JP 5-0, IV-19 – IV-22; for lines of effort see U.S. Army, *The Operations Process*, FM 5-0, B-18.

32. U.S. Army, *The Operations Process*, FM 5-0, 2-17.

33. All figures in this paper were conceived of and generated by the author and are not reproductions or representations from other sources.

34. Strange and Iron, ―Understanding Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities, Part 2: The GC-CC-CR-CV Construct.‖ and Joint Military Operations Department, *Joint Operations Planning Process (JOPP) Workbook,* C-1 – C-8.

35. CJCS, *Joint Operations Planning*, JP 5-0, IV-12.

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37. CJCS, *Joint Operations*, JP 3-0, IV-II.

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40. Ibid.

41. Clearly, the ability of al Qaeda to finance operations and franchises could be listed as a critical vulnerability; however, due to limitations on space and the amount of information of violent extremist organizations reliance on Western banking systems for financial transactions it is not included. For more information see Ehrenfeld, *Funding Evil: How Terrorism is Financed and How to Stop It*.

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46. Kilcullen, ―Countering Global Insurgency,‖ p. 604.

47. Shank, ―The Future of Political Islam in Somalia.‖

48. Gurney and Smotherman, ―An Interview with James T. Conway,‖ 12.

49. Sepp, ―Best Practices in Counterinsurgency,‖ 9-11.

50. Rheen, ―U.S. Mid-East Initiative Seeks Economic, Political, Educational Reform.‖

51. CJCS, *Joint Operations Planning*, JP 5-0, I-3.

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54. Ibid.

55. Blanchard. *Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology*.

56. Celeski, ―Hunter-Killer Teams,‖ 19.

57. Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla*, 297.

58. Gurney and Smotherman, ―An Interview with James T. Conway,‖ 12.

59. Ibid.

60. Sepp, ―Best Practices in Counterinsurgency,‖ 9.

61. Conetta, *Dislocating Alcyoneus*, 4.

62. Celeski, ―Hunter-Killer Teams,‖ 5.

63. MacDougall, ―Norway ‗Bomb Plot‘ Underscores al-Qaeda Pitfalls.‖

64. For examples see Pelofsky, ―Rights Groups Challenge Obama on Targeted Killings." Gebauer, ―The Truth About Task Force 373: War Logs Cast Light on Dirty Side of Afghanistan Conflict." and Nordan, ―The Best Defense is a Good Offense: The Necessity of Targeted Killing."

65. Mullen, ―From the Chairman: Working Together-Modern Challenges Need ‗Whole-of-Nation' Effort," 2.

66. Chiarelli and Michaelis, ―Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations," 6.

67. Thomas, ―Al Qaeda and the Internet: The Danger of ―Cyberplanning." 112-23.

68. Barclay, ―Al-Tarrus: al-Qaeda‗s Justification for Killing Muslim Civilians," 8.

69. Morris, ―Al Qaeda as Insurgency," 43.

70. Darley, ―Clausewitz‗s Theory of War and Information Operations," 73.

71. Cunningham, ―Strategic Communication in the New Media Sphere," 110.

72. Kilcullen, ―Countering Global Insurgency," 609.

73. Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, 300.

74. Chiarelli and Michaelis, ―Winning the Peace: Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations," 15.

75. Darley, ―Clausewitz‗s Theory of War and Information Operations," 77.

76. Strange and Iron, ―Understanding Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities, Part 2: The GC-CC-CR-CV Construct."

77. Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *Rewriting the Narrative: An Integrated Strategy for Counterradicalization*, 3.

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79. For a comprehensive overview of counterradicalization see: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *Rewriting the Narrative: An Integrated Strategy for Counterradicalization*.

80. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Website, ―Terrorism and Counter-Radicalization."

81. Benotman, ―Al-Qaeda: Your Armed Struggle is Over," Letter to Osama bin Laden.

82. Barclay, ―Al-Tarrus: al-Qaeda‗s Justification for Killing Muslim Civilians," 7; and Barclay, ―Tawhid al-Hakimiyah: A Jihadi Achilles Heel," 6.

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84. Helfstein, Abdullah, and al-Obaidi, *Deadly Vanguards: A Study of al-Qa'ida's Violence Against Muslims*, 2.

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86. CJCS, *Joint Operations Planning*, JP 5-0, IV-8.

87. Hybrid warfare theory predicts future conflicts will involve innovative tactics, techniques and in a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminant violence and coercion, and criminal disorder in a coordinated effort to achieve synergy across all levels of war; for details on hybrid warfare theory see: Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*; and Hoffman, ―Hybrid Warfare and Challenges," 34-39.

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